

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Ontario anti-violence organizations call for urgent federal action to end epidemic of gender-based violence**

Ottawa, ON — September 9, 2025 — On the evening of Thursday, September 18, organizations supporting survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) from across Ontario will gather in Ottawa to demand a crisis-level government response to Canada’s epidemic of femicide and intimate partner violence.

In Ottawa, the annual Take Back the Night march will conclude with a rally on Parliament Hill at 7:30 p.m., joined by groups from across eastern Ontario. While Take Back the Night marches will also be taking place in communities nationwide, Ontario organizations are linking arms under an additional message: “Take Back the Budget.”

Every two days in Canada, a woman or girl is killed — most often by a current or former partner. Indigenous women, 2SLGBTQI+ people, and women with disabilities experience violence at rates two to three times higher than others. Almost half (44 per cent) of women and girls over 15 have been in a violent relationship, and 4.7 million women have experienced sexual assault. These staggering numbers reflect a national epidemic.

“Gender-based violence hurts us all. It comes from sexism, racism, colonialism and hate towards 2SLGBTQI+ people. No one is safe until it ends. Without bold action, we are failing not just ourselves, but the next generation, who deserve to grow up and have relationships free from violence and abuse,” said Julie LaLonde, Executive Director of the Canadian Anti-Stalking Association.

Instead of meeting this crisis with the urgency it demands, the federal department responsible for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) is reportedly facing a potential 80% reduction to its budget. This devastating rollback would mean fewer services, longer wait lists, and survivors turned away at their most desperate moments.

The message from survivors and advocates is clear: funding must be maintained and increased — not cut.

**MORE**

We are calling on the federal government to:

- Maintain and increase WAGE funding, including reinstating core funding. When project funding sunsets, services disappear, and survivors lose support.

- Declare intimate partner violence an epidemic, recognizing it as a public health and safety crisis.
- Create an independent GBV watchdog to hold governments accountable to their promises, no matter who is in power.
- Prioritize prevention and early intervention, especially in communities targeted by sexual and gender-based violence.
- Fix broken systems that trap survivors in cycles of violence, including the housing crisis, income insecurity, and legal barriers.

**Building Canada Means Ending Violence**

The federal government has consistently found billions of dollars to support industries in crisis, from oil and gas to automotives to military spending. Survivors ask: why not us?

“Safety, gender equality and justice require steady, long-term funding. If we can mobilize to invest on industries so quickly, we can mobilize to protect lives, by maintaining and increasing WAGE funding so the programs women, children, and gender-diverse people count on remain in place,” said Lily Pourzand, Executive Director of Luke’s Place.

**Event Details**

Thursday, September 18 — Parliament Hill, Ottawa — 7:30 p.m.

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For media inquiries or to arrange interviews with spokespeople and survivors, contact:

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